

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary of Treasury
U.S. Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Madam Secretary:

We write to express our support for providing extra protections for restaurants as you finalize the rule for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, restaurants have struggled to stay afloat. Stay-at-home orders and social distancing requirements slowed the spread of COVID-19, but they also made it incredibly difficult for restaurants to remain open. More than 90,000 restaurants have permanently closed and tens of thousands more have significantly scaled down their operations.

The ability to move into curbside parking spots, utilize parking lots, and take over entire streets for outdoor dining helped keep many restaurants open and allowed them to continue to serve their communities. While the pandemic continues to impact our lives, and as the disease continues to mutate, cities and localities have started restricting restaurants' ability to continue to use these spaces.

More than 15 million people are employed by the restaurant industry across the country. Restaurants are the backbone of our society. It is imperative to both the industry and our overall economic recovery that restaurants have the support they need to continue doing business.

In Congress, we have taken steps to help the restaurant industry by creating the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF), an important lifeline. Unfortunately, demand far-exceeded available funding. More than 362,000 applications were submitted requesting \$75 billion in funding. Due to unprecedented need and a lack of funds, the Small Business Administration (SBA) closed the application portal on May 24, 2021 with nearly \$50 billion in outstanding need. There are still many struggling restaurants who are trying to get by and need our help to do so.

As you work to implement and finalize the rule for the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund and the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund established under the American Rescue Plan Act, we are asking you to do more to protect restaurants. Specifically, within the Interim Final Rule section on "Aid to Impacted Industries," we are requesting that you consider adding a requirement that states, cities, and localities allow restaurants to continue using outdoor spaces for the duration of the pandemic. It is critical that restaurants be able to continue operating outdoors, especially as winter approaches and the pandemic continues to pose a threat to lives and livelihoods.

Thank you for your assistance in this important matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Marie Newman
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress